in Vietnam, Sudan, Russia, Nigeria, Sao Tome Principe JDA, Iraq, Iran, Myanmar, Libya, Syria, Australia, Ivory Coast, Cuba, Qatar and Egypt.

India is also pursuing the import of natural gas from Iran through an onland pipeline *via* Pakistan and from Myanmar through an onland pipeline *via* Bangaldesh. India has also expressed an interest in considering participation in the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan pipeline.

Oil PSUs enter into term contracts for the supply of crude oil with the National Oil Companies of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, UAE, Malaysia, Nigeria, Brunei and Libya.

For extending guidance and advice to Indian oil companies in their efforts to acquire equity oil abroad, Government have constituted an Advisory Committee on Oil Diplomacy for Energy Security comprising experts with specialized knowledge of the countries and regions with whom the oil companies are expected to interact.

Private Companies in Gas Transmission Projects

2239. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have allowed private companies to lay gas transmission lines;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have set up an expert group to study international experience in building gas pipeline; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Gas Pipelines in the country have been laid and are being laid by the companies on commercial considerations. The gas pipeline network is proposed to be laid in a competitive environment with participation from both the public and private sectors. Besides GAIL, a public sector undertaking under the administrative control of this Ministry, at present, Gas Transportation and Infrastructure Company Ltd. (GTICL) and Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (GSPCL) also propose to lay gas pipelines in the country.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of reply to (c) above.